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INSTITUTE FOR  
**Sustainable  
Communities**

**CIVIL SOCIETY STRENGTHENING PROJECT**

In partnership with the European Center for Not-for-Profit Law, Konekt, and the Macedonian Institute for Media

# **Request for Applications**

## **Leader NGO Grants**

CSSP is funded by the United States Agency for International Development through Cooperative Agreement #165-A-00-05-00101 with the Institute for Sustainable Communities.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC) within the Civil Society Strengthening Project (CSSP) funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) announces a grant competition for experienced non-governmental organizations (NGOs) throughout the Republic of Macedonia. The goal of CSSP is to support Macedonia's civil society to become a more effective, influential, and permanent partner alongside government and businesses in shaping the country's present and future.

The purpose of the grant competition is to identify and develop a group of up to 8 leader NGOs that will complement the core group of 17 leader NGOs involved during the first three years of CSSP implementation. The diverse group of organizations will include issue-focused or service organizations, monitoring groups, issue-based coalitions or formal networks, professional associations and think tanks. Selected NGOs will represent diversity in geographic location and in gender and ethnic focus, as well as leadership and staffing. Previous CSSP Leader NGO grantees are eligible to apply, but will not receive preferential treatment.

Selected NGOs will be capable of serving as leaders in their sectors of expertise, and acting as mentors and resources to other NGOs. Applicants should demonstrate commitment to a particular issue or sector; a track record of success in furthering their mission; and the potential to achieve outstanding results. They should demonstrate how they will support the development of other NGOs or civil society in general either through the issues they address or through training, grant making, mentoring or information sharing and networking.

NGOs selected through this competition will be required to participate in an institutional strengthening program to complement their projects. Based on a Capacity Assessment, each NGO will develop and implement an Individualized Capacity Building Plan within the project framework. In addition to the grants for specific advocacy projects, each NGO will be provided with technical assistance, training, and information, for implementation of their projects and for the institutional development of their respective organizations.

## **GRANT CHARACTERISTICS**

Twelve-month grants of up to \$25,000 will be awarded to support specific advocacy projects that enable citizen participation in the general areas of decentralization; anti-corruption; and EU integration. Advocacy efforts should be aimed at achieving improved policies, procedures or systems of existing institutions at either central or local levels that will foster Macedonia's EU integration. Anti-corruption efforts will monitor government at central or local levels to promote greater transparency, identify corrupt practices and develop more efficient and accountable mechanisms.

Applicants may submit projects focused on any subject or type of activity that is within their mission and falls within the general areas outlined above. Successful NGO applications will present ambitious projects designed to achieve maximum impact. If appropriate, successful

projects should foster the development of multi-stakeholder partnerships with government, businesses and media.

The following is an illustrative list of the kinds of activities that might be included in the projects supported by CSSP:

- Monitoring implementation, application and compliance of legislation at national or local levels.
- Addressing legal and fiscal issues affecting NGOs
- Citizen oversight of equal access, equitable distribution, non-discrimination and efficiency in delivery of public services.
- Citizen oversight of financial, budgeting and accounting practices of local and national government institutions including government procurement.
- Promoting changes in anti-corruption legislation or mechanisms that improve public management.
- Developing models for provision of social services at a national level or in a decentralized system
- Implementation of legislation at the local level in support of the decentralization process
- Foster accountability in local decision-making, to gather citizen input for decision making or to review decision –making of municipal authorities.
- Other activities that support the aims of the grant competition as stated above.

The amount of any individual grant will depend upon the organization's proposed project and their capacity to manage funds. All projects must be completed no later than 12 months after the grant agreement has been prepared. NGOs will be required to allocate resources in their project plan and cost proposal following the Technical Guidelines. NGOs are expected to be cost effective and to demonstrate their commitment to the project's success by including cost-share in matching funds and in-kind contributions. The recommended cost-share target is 20%.

## APPLICATION ELIGIBILITY

NGOs that meet the eligibility requirements as stated below may apply for Leader NGO grants. **Please note that if an organization does not meet the eligibility criteria, the application WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED FOR REVIEW.**

1. *Registration* (Registered under the Law on Citizens' Associations and Foundations as a legal entity in Macedonia)
2. *Bank account*

**NOTE:** Previous CSSP Leader NGO grantees are eligible to apply, but will not receive preferential treatment.

## PROPOSAL EVALUATION PROCESS

All applications will be evaluated on a competitive basis in accordance with the criteria presented below. These criteria were developed to address the particular goals of the Civil Society Strengthening Project. The number of points assigned indicates the relative importance of each factor. To make the evaluation process as objective as possible, each applicant must clearly demonstrate how its proposal meets the following criteria.

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Maximum Points</b>
1. Project Proposal	40
2. Cost Proposal	20
3. Organizational Capacity and Past Performance	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

### 1. Project Proposal (40 points)

- Extent to which the proposed project is logical, well-conceived, technically sound, reflects an appreciation for the likely problems to be encountered and directly addresses the objectives identified in this RFA. Applications from coalitions and networks that demonstrate they can more effectively achieve results than an individual NGO working alone will be scored higher. (10 points)
- Extent to which the proposed project demonstrates: i) a clear understanding of the issue to be addressed, ii) original approaches to the issue in Macedonia, iii) concrete activities that demonstrate partners equal involvement in the project, iv) a set of concrete, meaningful and realistic results to be achieved, and v) a logical explanation of how the results will be measured. (15 points)
- Extent to which the proposed project addresses gender and ethnicity concerns. (5 points)
- Extent to which the proposed project's activities demonstrate long-term impact and sustainability, including affecting lasting changes within other sectors. (10 points)

### 2. Cost Proposal (20 Points)

- Extent to which the proposed costs are realistic and consistent with project activities. (10 points)
- The level of commitment demonstrated to provide matching funds and in-kind contributions. Proposed cost share will be evaluated based on the extent to which the application meets the targeted cost share of 20% and the added value it represents to the program. (10 points)

### 3. Organizational Capacity and Past Performance (40 points)

- Extent to which the applicant organization has demonstrated commitment to its mission and the ability to carry out the proposed project as planned, including

- adequate managerial and financial systems, and the extent of diversity in leadership and staffing. Readiness of the NGO to participate in the capacity building program will also be considered.(20 points)
- Extent to which the applicant organization has demonstrated leadership ability within their sector of expertise and the capacity to provide support and services to other NGOs. (20 points)

During the course of review ISC may request additional information from the applicant regarding the grant proposal or about the organization in general. A request for further information does not imply that ISC will or will not support the project; it simply indicates that the information is necessary in order to complete the review process.

In addition to the criteria outlined above, CSSP will take into consideration the balance of geographic coverage and issue areas when selecting finalists.

## APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

**Grant proposals should be submitted to the ISC office by 17:00 hours, August 26, 2008 in the required format with all required attachments. Proposals received after this time will not be considered therefore, we would encourage applicants to submit proposals in person or by courier service to the address listed below in order to meet the deadline.**

The complete application must be submitted in **3 (three) copies** in A4 size and in electronic format (CD-Rom). The electronic format must contain **exactly the same** proposal as the paper version enclosed.

Proposals should be submitted in Macedonian language, in Macedonian Cyrillic support font Arial, size 11. It must be accompanied by a 2 (two) page summary in English. The attached application form should be completed in full, along with the proposed project, which should not exceed **10 typed pages**.

Each copy of the application should be submitted in a **separate sealed envelope** and must bear the **title of the RFA**, together with the full name and address of the applicant.

An applicant may submit more than one proposal under this RFA; however, it may not be awarded more than one grant under this RFA.

- ISC will not accept applications submitted by fax and e-mail.
- ISC will not return any applications submitted.
- Handwritten proposals will not be considered.

Applicants will be informed of the status of their proposal in October 2008. ISC expects to award grants by the end of October 2008.

In the interest of equal treatment of applicants, ISC cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of an applicant, a partner or an action.

The Institute for Sustainable Communities

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